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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington, D.C. 20250 (202) 720-4330

Letter No. 2592

January 8, 1993

NUTRITION LABELING REGULATIONS -- USDA released final regulations requiring nutrition labels on processed meat and poultry products by July 1994. "The new labels will be an important tool to help consumers select more healthful diets," said Dr. H. Russell Cross, administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service. "We expect the labels also will provide food companies with an incentive to improve the nutritional quality of their products." The regulations closely parallel those of the Food and Drug Administration for labels on foods other than meat and poultry. As a result, consumers will see the same nutrition label format on virtually all processed foods. **Contact: Jim Greene (202) 720-0314.**

MITE-RESISTANT BEES -- Researchers with USDA's Agricultural Research Service are scheduled this spring to release honey bees from Yugoslavia that resist two mites now threatening the supply of bees needed to pollinate crops. USDA will release a stock to several bee breeders, and in turn, they will produce queens that will then be distributed to beekeepers. This is the first time the agency has ever released an insect as breeding stock. Researchers say the Yugoslavian bees have reliable resistance to varros and tracheal mites. Domestic bees lack this defense against the two mites that have caused extensive losses since they were discovered in the United States in the mid-1980s. The mites are considered a serious agricultural threat because bees pollinate billions of dollars worth of crops each year. **Contact: Sean Adams (301) 504-9108.**

FARM INCOMES INCREASE -- Record or near-record yields for many major U.S. field crops, such as grains, soybeans and cotton, have raised estimates of 1992 incomes. For 1993, first indications point to net cash income approaching 1990's record. Cash income and net farm income both increased in 1992, and calendar year 1993's net cash income is projected very near or equal to 1990's record. This is due to just slightly lower receipts, much higher Government payments and only slightly higher cash production expenses. Prices for the rest of the 1992/93 marketing year are expected to be down for all major field crops. Lower 1993 crop prices will likely offset the higher production that will carry over for sale in calendar 1993. **Contact: Charles Dodson (202) 219-0808.**

TOBACCO SITUATION -- The U.S. tobacco crop is larger this year than last, and total supplies are larger in 1992/93 because beginning stocks are also up. Average prices rose in North Carolina and Virginia, however, excessive rain hurt tobacco quality in Georgia and Florida. Total U.S. tobacco production this year is forecast up 1 percent from 1991 and the highest since 1984. Domestic use will likely decline but exports may gain a little this year. U.S. cigarette consumption in calendar 1992 decreased about 2 percent, however, an increase in exports will set a record of about 185 billion cigarettes. Use of cigar and chewing tobacco continue to decline. **Contact: Verner Grise (202) 219-0890.**

SOUTHERN STATES GET HELP WITH BOLL WEEVIL -- Since 1983, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has worked with growers and agriculture officials in Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina to help states eradicate the boll weevil, a pest in the cotton belt. In 1987 the program expanded into Georgia, Florida and portions of Alabama. The pest was eradicated in Virginia in 1983 and in North Carolina in 1988. And now, for the first time since the early 1900s, South Carolina cotton farmers did not have to apply pesticide to protect their crop from the boll weevil. "This is a major victory in the expanding battle to eradicate the boll weevil from infested areas of the cotton belt," said B. Glen Lee, deputy administrator for APHIS's Plant Protection and Quarantine program. Boll weevils were first discovered in the United States in 1892 and cause an estimated \$200 million in crop losses annually. **Contact: Ed Curlett (301) 436-7799.**

WORLD SUGAR -- World 1992/93 sugar production is estimated up from the September forecast, but down slightly from the 1991/92 record crop. Global consumption is estimated up 1.5 percent from 1991/92. Global production is forecast to exceed consumption for the fourth straight year in 1992/93. World sugar exports in 1992/93 are forecast slightly higher than last season. USDA forecasts fiscal 1993 sugar production at record levels, up 4.4 percent from last year's outturn. **Contact: Peter Buzzanell (202) 219-0886.**

COTTON UPDATE -- As the 1992 U.S. cotton harvest draws to a close, dry conditions are still needed in both the Southwest and Southeast. In the Southwest, the percentage of cotton harvested remains above 1991, but trails the 5-year average. In the Southeast wet conditions have delayed the harvest. **Contact: Bob Skinner (202) 219-0840.**

DISEASE THREATENS HAZELNUT TREES -- Researchers with USDA's Agricultural Research Service are trying to find ways to eradicate a slow-moving blight that threatens European hazelnut trees in Oregon, where nearly all the U.S. crop is grown. The disease showed up in southwestern Washington about 20 years ago. Since then, it has destroyed most commercial orchards in the state and has spread to about 6 percent of Oregon's hazelnut orchards. Although the nuts are not affected by the disease, the trees can die after 7 or 8 years. **Contact: John Pinkerton (503) 750-8784.**

NEW PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION -- USDA issued certificates of protection to developers of 24 new varieties of seed-reproduced plants including Kentucky bluegrass, corn, lettuce, pea, sorghum and soybean. Developers of the new varieties will have the exclusive right to reproduce, sell, import and export their products in the U.S. for 18 years. Certificates of protection are granted after a review of the breeders' records and claims that each variety is novel, uniform and stable. **Contact: Becky Unkenholz (202) 720-8998.**

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FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1857 -- Jim Henry reports on studies indicating the quality of our "golden" years may relate directly to the nutritional quality of our diet. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1339 -- Investing in the Russian Far East; mushrooms and the environment; weight loss advice; desserts going strong; and learning to care. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1849 -- USDA news highlights; soybeans on flex acres; U.S. hog inventory; a new/old farm crisis; and farm finance future. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1602 -- Addiction to inactivity; a little bit helps; boosting metabolism; darkside of dieting; and reducing health care costs. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Friday, January 15, livestock and poultry situation, vegetables; Tuesday, January 19, U.S. ag trade update, crop/weather update; Thursday, January 21, oil crops situation, catfish processing; Friday, January 22, livestock/poultry update, dairy outlook. **These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.**

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

Material changed at 5 p.m., ET, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on a livestock video judging contest; Lynn Wyvill reports on teaching children about food safety; Pat O'Leary reports on USDA's consumer quiz; Artis Ford, Mississippi State University, reports on rural health concerns; and Dave Luciani, Michigan State University, reports on the war against bugs.

ACTUALITIES -- Agriculture Secretary Edward Madigan on USDA restructuring; USDA meteorologist Norton Strommen on weather and crops; and USDA economist Bob McElroy on agricultural income and finance.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- Lynn Wyvill reports on food safety using slow cookers; Pat O'Leary reports on changing farm numbers; and DeBoria Janifer reports on nutrition labeling regulations.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- Agriculture Update with anchors Eric Parsons and Lori Spiczka. Five minutes of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., ET, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., ET, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., ET.

OFFMIKE

SPRING...will be a scramble for producers in Minnesota, says **Roger Strom** (WCCO, Minneapolis). The wet conditions caused a spread-out harvest, some corn remained in the fields through Christmas, offering little opportunity for field work preparation. Farmers will need an early spring. Roger says winter has been mild so far. While that's good for heating costs, it has prompted producers to keep a close watch for the development of mold in their bins. Much of the grain was stored with high moisture content. Congratulations to Roger. The Minnesota Farm Bureau presented to him their Communicator of the Year award.

LOOKING FORWARD...to a more normal year in 1993 is **Matt Westergaard** (KMIT, Mitchell, SD). Matt says the corn harvest continues in the southern portion of the state where producers needed firm ground to get into the fields. There is also concern about mold developing in their grain bins. Matt broadcast live from the Dakota Farm Show, in Vermillion, SD, January 5-7. Matt says it gave him an opportunity to meet his audience. The Farm Show draws producers from four states.

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MOST OF THE HARVEST...has been completed; what Missouri producers are looking for is better prices, says **Gene Millard** (KFEQ, St. Joseph). Excellent yields and adequate drying have bins full and in good condition. Gene will join **Gary Wergin** in broadcasting live from the Empire Farm Show, January 29-30, in St. Joseph, MO. Gene will be traveling to Phoenix, AZ, to cover the upcoming National Cattlemen's Association convention. Congratulations to Gene. The Missouri Farm Bureau presented to him their highest recognition, the Outstanding Service to Agriculture award. It recognizes his 28 years of maintaining a focus on agriculture at KFEQ.

COMPLETE...the information requested and return the postage paid card if you are among those broadcasters receiving our weekly cassette service. The card was included in the mailing dated January 5, 1993. We are updating our list, please return the card if you want to continue receiving the cassette. If a card was not in the cassette envelope, please call to let us know.

VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio & TV Division